

Letters

Thank You, Thay

Dear Thay,

I just finished a weekend retreat with Dharma Teacher Larry Ward. The insight and mindfulness I learned was very helpful to my practice and essential for my growth.

You may not remember, but in 1995 I was incarcerated at Folsom State Prison. While there your organization sent me a free subscription to the *Mindfulness Bell*. We started a meditation group and you donated many books and audio tapes. When I was paroled in 1997 our group had grown to over 300 men meeting weekly to sit in mindfulness meditation. I hear now it has grown to at least eight prisons with over 3000 men meditating daily. The books and meditation help you provided are still part of the meditation library at Folsom State Prison.

I have remained with my practice and what I learned from your books and teaching has helped me be successful with my freedom. For that I must say thank you.

I also took the Three Jewels and Five Mindfulness Trainings this morning at our retreat with Larry Ward.

I am now beginning to use my talent to teach more prisoners about meditation through a journal/newsletter. You can read about it on my website at <http://m-squared.org/dharmaseeds.html>

I hope to someday meet you in person and bow in reverence for what you passed on to me through your teaching — for which I am ever grateful.

Peace,
Mark Maxey
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Editor's reply (from Sr. Annabel at Plum Village):
Dear friend, thank you for being free where you are. Thay is very happy when he reads your letter.

DHARMA THE CAT by David & Ted



www.DharmaTheCatCartoons.com

courtesy David Lourie

Printing on Recycled Paper

At the New Year retreat at Blue Cliff Monastery, the little Buddhas took the vow of the Two Promises. They vow to develop understanding and compassion to people, animals, plants and minerals.

The evening before that I made my resolution for the New Year: "to feel the pain of the earth and to act, just a small step, a promise I can keep." This letter is the fruit of that resolution and the will to help the little Buddhas with their vow.

When we read the "oldest text on deep ecology," as our teacher calls the *Diamond Sutra*, we learn that we have to respect and protect other beings in order for us to have a chance. We read this on a paper that is a tree, the air we breathe and the whole universe.

My aspiration for the year 2008 is to read the *Diamond Sutra* and the *Mindfulness Bell* on post-consumer recycled paper, that we may have a chance to develop our understanding and compassion for all beings.

Gil-Ad Arama
Montreal, Quebec

Editor's reply: We had been thinking about this for a while but Gil-Ad's letter prompted action! Printing on 100% post-consumer waste (PCW) recycled paper would cost too much and increase the weight of the magazine. We have switched to 30% PCW for the inside pages and 100% PCW for the cover, which slightly increased our printing costs. Contributions to the Mindfulness Bell to help offset those increased costs are most welcome.

EJAB Update

The European Institute for Applied Buddhism has received so much support from readers of the *Mindfulness Bell*. We are very heartened and grateful for this support. We have almost found a home for our first establishment. It is in Germany, very close to Cologne and Bonn.

We need one more official go-ahead from the government of Germany before we can buy the property. The town councillors of four different political parties have voted unanimously to accept our buying the property and we are hopeful that in six weeks or so we shall be able to make the purchase. At that time we shall be asking for any material support you can give to make the purchase.

It would be wonderful if you could come to Germany and practice in the Institute itself, but if you cannot make the journey do not worry. The courses offered at the Institute will also be offered at Blue Cliff, Deer Park, and Plum Village.

In the garden of five hectares we shall establish a garden of medicinal herbs.

There will be more news in the next edition of the *Mindfulness Bell*.

Sister Annabel, True Virtue
New Hamlet, Plum Village, France

Winter/Spring 2008 Issue

Here's a little story of how our Sangha enjoyed the latest MB.

In January our Sangha wanted to do a Beginning Anew ceremony and our host for the night, Rhonda, wanted to introduce it with a few words. Well Rhonda was the first to get her *Mindfulness Bell* — weeks before the rest of us did — so she was able to read some passages from Janelle's article and the one by Brother Phap An and Sister Dang Nghiêm. It was lovely. We all said it was a miracle that Rhonda got the magazine so early — that Thay and the folks at the MB were taking care of us, protecting us, making us so happy.

Terry Cortes-Vega
Austin, Texas

We love to receive your letters and suggestions.

Please e-mail editor@mindfulnessbell.org or write to *Mindfulness Bell*, c/o David Percival, 745 Cagua S.E., Albuquerque NM 87108, U.S.A.